Contract of Prasar Bharati with UNI and PTI

†1899. SHRI ALI ANWAR ANSARI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that renewal of the contract and revision in rates between Prasar Bharati, United News of India (UNI) and Press Trust of India (PTI) is pending over several years; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Prasar Bharati in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Prasar Bharati has informed that News Services Division (NSD) was making payment to United News of India (UNI) and Press Trust of India (PTI) as per the rates earlier decided by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting up to 31.03.2000. Thereafter, an agreement for the rates was made by Prasar Bharati with the approval of Prasar Bharati Board for a period up to 31.03.2006. After that NSD is making payments to UNI/PTI on *ad-hoc* and pro-rata basis. The Price Negotiation Committee (PNC) was set up by Prasar Bharati on 11.05.2006 for this purpose.

Unauthorised TV channels by cable operators

1900. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that several unauthorized channels are being shown by cable operators;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Q TV, Peace TV and Saudi TV are beaming programmes for preaching religious matters; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken for checking illegal downloading of these TV channels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government is in receipt of inputs regarding downlinking and retransmission of unregistered satellite TV channels by Cable operators in their network in certain parts of the country.

(c) and (d) The Government is in receipt of inputs of some channels which have neither been permitted to uplink from India nor permitted/ registered to downlink in India as per the uplinking and downlinking guidelines are being shown illegally. The content shown on TV channels including religious content is regulated as per the provision of Programme Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Rules made thereunder. However the Programme Code permits cable operators to carry only such satellite

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

TV channels as are registered with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Authorized Officers under the Cable Act which include District Magistrates, Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Commissioners of Police are empowered to take action against the cable operators in case of carriage of unregistered channels. The Ministry has been communicating with the State Governments for setting up of State and District level Monitoring Committees to ensure compliance of the provisions of the Cable Act and the Rules thereunder. The Government on 7.10.2009 has issued an advisory to all authorized Multi System Operators and Cable Operators Associations to discontinue with immediate effect transmission/re-transmission of illegal channels failing which penal action would be taken. The Ministry is also in touch with the Ministry of Home Affairs to curb the carriage of unauthorized TV channels by cable operators.

Functioning of Prasar Bharati

†1901. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Prasar Bharati is not functioning smoothly as an autonomous institution;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether Government is considering establishment of a regulatory authority for smooth functioning of Prasar Bharati;

(c) whether Government is considering to dissolve the Board of Prasar Bharati by bringing in an ordinance; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) and (b) The Government has received copies of representations and correspondences from members of the Prasar Bharati Board to the CEO and also the Chairman, Prasar Bharati Board regarding issues pertaining to the functioning of the Prasar Bharati Board. Government has ordered a special audit of Prasar Bharati on General Accounting Issues including the issue of functioning of Prasar Bharati and its Board and Specific Financial Issues as per the complaints of Member (Finance) Prasar Bharati.

The letters are in the nature of allegations regarding irresponsible behaviour of the Chairman, CEO and members of the Board, manner of fixing dates for the Board meetings, finalization and issue of minutes in departure from the past practices, financial irregularities, systemic problems etc. indicating disharmony among the Board members.

A Public Interest Litigation was filed by Center for Public Interest Litigation in the High Court of Delhi which included certain issues pertaining to functioning of the Board. The High Court *vide* its interim order dated 27/07/2009, has given directions on certain issues pertaining to the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.